



Kilton Road
Six Bedford Farms, Suite 607
Bedford, New Hampshire 03110-6532
603 644-0888
FAX 603 644-2385

Meeting Notes

Attendees:	See Attached List	Date/Time:	6/27/02 4:00 to 7:00PM open house & 7:00PM Presentation
		Project No.:	50885
Place:	Salem High School, Salem NH	Re:	Salem Public Informational Meeting
		Notes taken by:	Bruce A. Tasker

Prior to the formal presentation, plans were set up in an "open house" setting to address issues, comments, and questions in an informal matter with the public on an individual basis.

For the formal meeting at 7:00PM, Jeff Brillhart opened the meeting and made introductions. He explained that this meeting is one of five Public Informational meetings being held by the Department in each of the communities along the study section of I-93 from Salem to Manchester. This meeting focuses on the status of the project since the last meetings were held in November and December of last year and is part of the Department Public Information meeting process initiated in the spring of 2000.

Jeff explained the Department is charged with improving the capacity and safety of this 18-mile section. He explained that in the Salem and Manchester areas, the highway currently carries over 110,000 vpd (vehicles per day) and 70,000 vpd, respectively. I-93 has a theoretical capacity to carry in the vicinity of 60,000 vpd to 70,000 vpd. By 2020, the projected volumes are approximately 140,000 vpd in Salem and 85,000 vpd in Manchester. The highway is over capacity today and the situation will worsen over time. Given the volume of vehicles on the highway, and the narrow width of the highway, I-93 is less forgiving than it otherwise might be, and consequently less safe.

In addition, given the age of the highway and the fact that it has not seen much in the way of major maintenance over the last 30 to 40 years, the highway is in need of major reconstruction.

The Department is conducting the design and evaluation process using the format of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A Scoping Report was published in the Spring of 2000 and addressed the project purpose and need, the existing conditions of traffic and infrastructure needs, and resources of concern.

Rail opportunities and what might be issues if rail service was implemented was studied. This evaluation was documented in a Rail Alternatives Study published in November of 2000.

The Department looked at a wide range of alternatives, conducted ridership analyses of various modes of transportation, and considered the merits of the possible alternatives. The alternatives were screened that would not address the project purpose and need. This evaluation and screening was documented in the Rationale Report published in the spring of 2001.

Currently, the Department is completing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement discussing the reasonable range of alternatives and how they might affect the environment and address the project purpose and need.

As part of the study the Department has considered:

- A bike route along the I-93 corridor from Exit 2 to Exit 5 as part of a larger north - south of bike system study being done by the Department from Salem to Concord. This larger study will look at how the I-93 bike route might be incorporated to facilitate north-south bike movements.
- Potential secondary growth. Secondary growth may happen as a result of making NH more accessible by widening the highway, which in turn increases the construction of more homes and business in the communities along the corridor and outside the corridor, which may in turn create their own environmental impacts. These impacts to natural resources caused by secondary growth are of concern.
- Improving incident management. The Department has been working with local safety (police and fire) agencies, the state police, and the Federal Highway Administration to consider what steps might be taken to improve incident management capabilities; that is, addressing accidents along I-93 in a more timely manner to minimize delays and congestion. Some measures have been implemented and other will be added to improve the incident management capabilities before construction, during construction, and after construction is completed along the corridor.
- A large range of mitigation possibilities. Mitigation measures are intended to offer a means to offset the impacts associated with widening the highway. These measures include creating wetlands and floodplains and preserving important natural resource areas.

Jeff provided an overview of issues received at the various local meetings. That feedback focused on:

- Whether to widen I-93 to three or four lanes in each direction. The Department is proposing to build four lanes from Salem to Manchester.
- The need to minimize impacts to private properties.
- The need to construct sound barriers to lessen noise in neighborhoods adjacent to the highway.

Individual towns have also expressed their particular concerns relative to how the project affects their community.

For Salem a primary issue has been that the project not exacerbate the flooding that occurs in the Town and within the Spickett River watershed.

For Windham and Salem, a predominant issue has been the need to address water quality and highway runoff, especially with Canobie Lake (drinking water supply for Salem) and Cobbetts Pond located adjacent to the corridor.

Windham is also very much interested in ways to reduce the overall footprint of the highway through the Exit 3 interchange.

In Londonderry and Salem, the neighborhoods have expressed concerns about proposed park and ride lots.

Plan Presentation:

Tony Grande then described the plans. He noted the typical roadway cross-section, which includes four 12' travel lanes and 12' wide shoulders on the inside and outside of each barrel. Space (ranging from 60' to 90') for a potential future rail line is also being proposed to be reserved within the median as part of this project. A bike trail is conceptually depicted at the toe of slope or top of bank along the outside of the corridor from Exit 2 to Exit 5. Sound walls will also be constructed in selected locations throughout the project.

Tony then described the 200-scale plans for the entire project beginning at the MA/NH state line and proceeding north to the I-93/I-293 split in Manchester. The 200-scale plan depicts the Departments Preferred Alternative, which is to widen I-93 to provide four travel lanes in each direction. Tony briefly presented the various design elements for the entire project proceeding from north to south:

- The potential future rail corridor would begin in Massachusetts and as it crosses the border into New Hampshire it would be located along the west side of the highway up to Exit 1 where it then crosses over the SB barrel and into the median. The rail line would then remain within the median all the way up to just north of Exit 5 where it would tie back into the existing rail bed to the west.
- The proposed bike path would begin at the Exit 2 park and ride and continue along the corridor, connecting with each of the park and rides, before ending at the Exit 5 park and ride.
- Beginning at the MA border the highway would be widened to accommodate four lanes in each direction. The bridge at Cross Street would be replaced; the Exit 1 ramps would be reconstructed to improve the existing geometry; and the bridges over NH 38 would also be replaced.
- In the Exit 2 area, the interchange would be reconstructed to a diamond type interchange configuration, eliminating the existing loop ramps. Pelham Road would be widened through the interchange area and a new park and ride lot is proposed in the southeast quadrant with access from South Policy Street to Raymond Avenue. The Brookdale Road Bridge would also be replaced.
- Approaching the Exit 3 area, the NB barrel will be shifted closer to the SB barrel, which will also be relocated and shifted slightly towards the median. A new diamond type interchange configuration is also proposed and a section of NH 111, west of I-93, will be relocated to the north and widened. A new park and ride lot adjacent to the NB barrel is also proposed.
- In general, all of the I-93 bridges south of the Exit 3 weigh stations are being replaced while the majority of the bridges to the north have been held as controls during the design, which will allow many of these newer bridges to be kept in place and widened.
- Approaching Exit 4, the bridges over Lowell Road, Fordway Extension and Kendall Pond Road will all be widened.
- Through the Exit 4 area, the westerly edge is held as a control and the widening occurs to the east. The existing SB ramps will be retained while the NB ramps will be reconstructed. The NH 102 bridge will be replaced, south of the existing bridge, and NH 102 will be widened. The Ash Street Bridge will also be replaced.

- Just south of Exit 5, the bridges over Stonehenge Road will be widened. The existing diamond interchange will be reconstructed with the same type configuration and NH 28 will be widened through the interchange area. The bridges over NH 28 and over the abandoned rail line will be replaced. A new park and ride is also proposed in the northwest quadrant.
- Proceeding into Manchester the bridges over Bodwell road and Cohas Brook. will be widened to accommodate five lanes in each direction to allow for merging and diverging traffic for three lanes for I-93 and two lanes for I-293.
- Sound walls will also be constructed at ten different locations identified along the corridor. Five locations were identified in Salem, and partially carrying over into Windham. One sound wall was identified in Derry, two in Londonderry and two in Manchester.

Tony then described the 100 scale more detailed plans, which depict the Salem area only.

Beginning at the southern end of the project, the easterly edge of pavement is held as a control through the majority of this section. The highway widening is primarily to the west in this area to minimize impacts to Policy Brook. There will be some widening to the east to accommodate the proposed sound wall and the collector-distributor road on the easterly side between the MA/NH border and the rest area. Near the MA/NH border an auxiliary lane is added to the four NB lanes to provide a transition to a 5-lane section for a short distance until the introduction of a 2-lane collector-distributor (C/D) road for traffic wishing to use the rest area or the Exit 1 NB Off-ramp. The Exit 1 NB Off-ramp will be a two-lane off-ramp transitioning and matching into the existing 3-lane section approaching Rockingham Boulevard.

Tony noted that at Cross Street the bridge would be replaced with a new longer span bridge to the north. The existing bridge would be used to maintain traffic until the new bridge is completed. The old structure would then be removed.

For the Exit 1-interchange, SB ramps would be reconstructed on new location, further to the west to improve to the existing geometry.

Continuing to the north, the inside edges of I-93 are being held with widening to the east for the NB barrel and to the west for the SB barrel to minimize impacts to Porcupine Brook in the median.

The grade as I-93 passes over NH 38 would be raised and the bridges replaced with longer span structures.

At Exit 2 the NB ramps would be reconstructed and would retain the diamond type configuration as exists today. The SB ramps would be reconstructed in a new diamond configuration, similar to the NB ramps. The existing SB weaving section is eliminated, which has been a safety concern. Pelham Road will be widened to a 5/6-lane section to help move the traffic through the interchange more efficiently.

At Brookdale Road, a new bridge would be constructed along the alignment of the existing bridge. A temporary detour bridge to the south will be used to maintain traffic during construction.

A park and ride lot is planned at Exit 2 with access to the Park and Ride from Raymond Avenue, which will be widened and reconstructed. The reconstruction will extend to South Policy Road, which will be widened to allow for left and right-turn lanes, and a new signal will be installed.

A bike trail is also shown along the I-93 corridor. The bike trail would begin at the Exit 2 park and ride lot using Raymond Avenue and South Policy Road roadway shoulders, which then to connects

to a separate path at the Exit 2, interchange and follows along the eastern side of the NB barrel into Windham.

Noise barrier locations are currently being recommended in the following four locations in Salem:

- South of Rest Area near Haigh Avenue/Azarian Drive, NB side
- MacLarnon Road and MacGregor Street, near the Exit 1NB off-ramp
- Fern Road near NH 38, SB side
- North of Brookdale Road along South Shore Road, NB side
- North of Brookdale Road, near May Lane, SB side

Tony identified the locations of the various homes and businesses that may be acquired as part of the highway improvements.

I-93 Widening	NH 38 (2); Trolley Lane (2)	4 Ho.
Rail Corridor ROW	Valeska Lane (1); Williston Rd. (2)	3 Ho.
Cross Street		2 Ho.
Pelham Rd.		1 Ho.
Park and Ride	Raymond Ave	7 Ho. & 1 Bus.

Wetland Mitigation

Peter Walker explained that as part of the federal guidelines for projects like this the Department is required to mitigate impacts to wetlands and natural resources. As such the Department has been in the process of identifying possible wetland mitigation sites to offset impacts resulting from the project improvements. Peter noted that the total number of wetland impacted by the Department's Preferred Alternative is approximately 85 acres which includes approximately one acre for the park and rides and approximately 10 acres for the proposed bike path. In the Town of Salem the wetland impacts are approximately 24 acres. These impacts occur in more than 60 locations, mostly associated with impacts along the edge of the existing highway. Peter highlighted the three main brook systems in the Salem area of the project: Porcupine Brook, Policy Brook, and the Spicket River. Peter explained that some impacts to Porcupine Brook will result due to the lengthening of existing culverts. Additionally, Policy Brook parallels the eastern side of the highway south of Exit 1 and will be impacted by noise barrier construction.

As required, the project must provide mitigation to compensate for the impacts. The mitigation is generally made up of three forms:

- Wetland creation, which creates wetlands out of upland or dry land area.
- Wetland restoration and enhancement, which in effect restores previously filled wetlands or changes existing wetlands vegetation or hydrology.
- Preservation, which involves preserving existing wetland and adjacent upland.

Peter noted that all of the potential wetland mitigation sites that the Department is currently considering are shown on a 1"=1000' scale presentation plans. Peter then showed a 1"=500' scale plan of the Salem area which depicts the existing wetland systems and floodplains associated with Policy Brook, Porcupine Brook and the Spicket River. The Department has looked at more than 60 different possible mitigation sites throughout the project corridor, totaling several thousand acres of land. These sites have been suggested by local residents, local communities, and the resource agencies. In Salem approximately 9 sites comprising 400 acres of land are currently under consideration. Peter described the nine site locations.

- Pelham Road (advance mitigation site); a creation and preservation site along Porcupine Brook to the southwest of Exit 2.
- Garabedian Drive land; 35 acres of undeveloped field with some development adjacent to the Spicket River floodplain.
- The abandoned Salem Waste Water treatment plant; 32 acres, near the Spicket River floodplain.
- An industrial parcel, to the north and west of I-93 SB overpass over NH 38 (Lowell Road). This 14 acre site may be developed in the next few months.
- Behind the Salem Public Works garage, where wetlands and floodplain storage might be created adjacent to Policy Brook.
- A residential property west of the SB barrel between NH 38 and Exit 1 ramps; six acres of residential land that would allow for flood storage.
- A 27 acre site, south of the Rockingham Mall, at the confluence of Porcupine and Policy Brook, previously under consideration for a park and ride lot. The site would provide preservation of existing prime wetlands.
- The "Southeast Lands," a block of about 1000 acres, with a Natural Heritage site. DOT is proposing 250 acres be acquired for preservation.

The Pelham Road (advanced mitigation site), the abandoned Salem wastewater treatment site, the industrial parcel on the north side of NH 38, the residential property on the south side of NH 38, and the site south of the Rockingham Mall have been proposed by the NHDOT thus far for consideration. Peter explained that the locations need further evaluation and discussion with the communities and Resource Agencies as to which sites best serve the mitigation package.

Schedule

Jeff noted that Councilor Ruth Griffin and Representative Chuck Morse were in attendance. Councilor Griffin will chair the Public Hearing this fall and be a part of the decision making process. Jeff Brillhart went on to say that this is the second of a round of five meetings being held in the corridor communities in June and July. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled to be published in July. A design Public Hearing is scheduled for September/October of this year. The Final Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled for completion in the spring of 2003. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2004.

Questions and Comments

- Comment: I am stunned by the four-lane proposition. I feel that we are considering the Franconia Notch project all over again. The Department proposed 4-lanes for that I-93 project widening and eventually it was cut back to something reasonable. It looks like NHDOT is trying to make I-93 the dominant roadway for southern NH.
- What happens at the border where Massachusetts only has three lanes and NH has four lanes, or is Massachusetts going to build four lanes?
- What are we going to do about the backups at the Hooksett Tolls and the congestion on the secondary or local roadways connecting to the interstate?
- How many acres of natural landscape are we going to destroy building this project?
- Has the Department fully considered the implications of what is being proposed relative to secondary growth?
- Jeff Brillhart: Improving a highway or any transportation system has implications or ramifications. The Department will address those in the environmental impact statement. The

ramifications of this project and the growth that may occur from widening I-93 is an issue people need to be aware of. Widening the highway may facilitate or accelerate growth in NH. It will be important for the various planning boards along and outside the corridor to plan for the future growth that is coming regardless of the widening. Relative to future traffic growth at the Hooksett tolls and other roadways accessing I-93, these portions of the transportation system will need to be addressed over time as part of the Ten Year Transportation Improvement Program.

Comment: What is the possibility of transferring some of this I-93 traffic to the Spaulding Turnpike? I would ask the Department to consider the strategic value of two corridors in case one of them becomes interrupted, and thus consider widening the Spaulding Turnpike to create an alternative to widening I-93.

Jeff Brillhart: The Department does have in its Ten Year Program, projects to consider widening the Spaulding Turnpike in Dover and Rochester, and in Newington and Dover. These projects are independent of the need to improve the I-93 corridor. There is also a project to improve I-93 in the Bow-Concord area.

Relative to the proposed four-lane section in NH versus the existing three-lane section in Massachusetts, the proposed four lanes in NH will transition down as shown on the plans to meet the three lanes at the state line. Massachusetts currently completing a study to look at I-93 and as part of that study MA is considering widening I-93 from the state line southerly, from Methuen to Andover and match the four lanes that exists today south of Andover. NH is working with MA to possibly extend the four-lane section from the state line to the Rte 213 interchange in Massachusetts where nearly approximately 25 % of the traffic gets off I-93 SB.

I don't know the number of acres of impact to the vegetative cover.

Comment: I understand the direct impacts right along the corridor and the meetings that the Department is holding to discuss those impacts, however with regard to secondary impacts to those communities that lie outside the corridor, the Department should consider meeting with those towns to provide information and to understand what the secondary impacts might do to these communities.

Jeff Brillhart: If the towns have an audience and contact the Department, we would be happy to meet with them. There are 250 towns in NH and trying to decide with whom to meet is very difficult. The towns along the corridor are going to experience the direct impacts to floodplains, wetlands, historic resources and they are also going to have the biggest secondary impacts. The Department feels that these communities need to have their impacts addressed first and foremost.

We are currently working with two towns outside the corridor and one inside the corridor as part of a "Grow Smart" technical assistance demonstration program. This program is a forerunner to the type of mitigation the Department is considering to help towns in the south central part of the State cope with future growth. This type of support hopefully will be beneficial to NH communities. Growth is coming whether I-93 is widened or not, and it would appear that many communities could use assistance to deal with this growth.

Comment: When is the Public Hearing and what would make this plan change from what we see being presented tonight?

Jeff Brillhart: For the most part the plans are a result of input from many project stakeholders at many meetings, and in general the plans will not change dramatically between now

and the Public Hearing scheduled for this September. The plans will change where better information becomes available.

- Comment: Which will cost more, to widen a bridge or to build a new bridge?
- Jeff Brillhart: The cost is based on the needs and condition of the bridge in question. If the condition is poor, rehabilitation and widening may not be cost effective. Some bridges will need to be replaced because the existing bridge needs to be longer.
- Comment: Has the Department coordinated this project with the Town of Salem? Improving Pelham Road, i.e. adding more lanes will only create more problems at Main Street. Has anyone considered making Main Street one way and Veteran's Parkway one way?
- Jeff Brillhart: The Department has had a number of meetings with the Town Officials and the public relative to this project. There is a separate Town project in the Salem Depot area. Relative to a one-way street system, I don't know if the Town has considered such an option or not.
- Comment: Can you point out where the soundwalls are located along the corridor in Salem?
- Tony Grande: Tony identified the wall locations in Salem and noted that there are 10 soundwall locations along the corridor from Salem to Manchester. Some of the soundwalls that were shown at the previous meetings were not carried forward after final evaluation because they did not meet the Department's Noise Policy economic criteria.
- Comment: What will the soundwalls look like? Can you construct the barriers early-on before all the major construction begins?
- Tony Grande: The proposed soundwalls will look like the walls that were just constructed near the I-93 crossing of Bodwell Road in Manchester just south of the I-293/I-93 split. The walls are concrete vertical posts with wood planks between.
- Jeff Brillhart: This was a question that came up in the Manchester area and the Department was able to build a majority of the soundwalls first. The Department will look to construct soundwalls prior to widening the highway, where practicable.
- Comment: Where do the lanes transition at the Massachusetts/ New Hampshire border?
- Tony Grande: Northbound from MA the existing three-lane section is widened to four lanes at the border and the four lanes are carried to Manchester. There the four northbound lanes diverge to two lanes westerly to I-293/NH 101 and three lanes continue northerly on I-93. Southbound the lanes transition from four lanes in Salem to the three existing lanes in Methuen at the state line through a gradual lane taper.
- George Jones: Where can I get the information that validates the need for sound barriers and that they do work if constructed?
- Charlie Hood: We have some limited information at our office based on what the Department has collected where soundwalls have been constructed in NH. Other information that verifies that sound barriers work is in studies from Maryland, California, etc. and from the Federal Highway Administration. The data we have collected in NH shows that the noise behind a barrier is typically reduced from 8 to 10 decibels.
- George Jones: My understanding is that the homes immediately behind the barrier are protected, but as you move further away the levels are the same or greater than without the

- barrier. What happens is the noise is amplified further away from the wall, as I understand it.
- Charlie Hood: Before a soundwall is constructed, the noise from the highway goes out in a straight line with the brunt of the sound being received by the first row of houses which take the brunt of the sound. The houses further to the back may get some relief because they may be behind the first row of houses, which act to some degree as a soundwall. Once the barrier is constructed much of the noise is deflected upward over the barrier. The homes directly behind the barrier get immediate noise relief, and those further away also get noise relief because the noise that reaches them has to travel further. In areas where the Department has installed barriers, complaints have not been received.
- George Jones: The State of Maine has an ongoing widening and reconstruction for the Maine Turnpike. The entire project is on a five-year schedule. Why will NH's project take so long?
- Jeff Brillhart: I think NH's project is a bigger in overall scale. Maine has been replacing bridges over a number of years getting ready for the widening. NH's project involves more homes and adjacent business properties than Maine's. The topography in Maine is easier than this section of I-93 from Salem to Manchester. The Maine project is on a very aggressive schedule. Perhaps NH will complete its improvement on a similar schedule. To some degree funding will dictate the schedule. Right now we think it will take 8 to 10 years.
- George Jones: I do not think the corridor communities can put up with 8 to 10 years of constructing I-93 given the traffic diversion that will occur to avoid the construction. Traffic will use the local north-south roads to avoid the construction. I think we can survive 4 to 5 years, but not 8 to 10 years in Salem.
- Jeff Brillhart: I do not think that Salem will feel the construction impact for that length of time.
- Bill Cass: The Department is committed to having two lanes NB and SB open to traffic at all times. That is one part of the rationale for constructing four lanes versus three lanes. With the four-lane alternative, the widening will allow traffic to stay on the existing lanes while two new lanes are added. Once those lanes are complete the traffic would shift over to the new lanes and the existing lanes would be reconstructed. Widening one additional lane in each direction as with the three-lane alternative would require the highway to be over-widened at least temporarily to accommodate a minimum of two lanes in each direction for traffic management.
- Comment: At Brookdale Road, will the temporary bridge and roadway approaches be removed after the new bridge is completed?
Prior to the construction, will you look at the how blasting may affect our properties and wells?
- Tony Grande: Yes, the new Brookdale Road bridge will be constructed where the existing bridge is today. The temporary approaches and pavement constructed for the detour will be removed once the new bridge is completed.
- Jeff Brillhart: Relative to the how the blasting and construction might affect your well or home, it would be advisable to send the Department a letter with your concerns. The Department will take pictures of the property and test wells before the blasting and construction. If the Department has damaged your well as part of the construction, the Department will replace your well.

- Comment: With regard to the project mitigation, what is the timetable for determining the final site locations?
- Jeff Brillhart: The Department is exploring all the options identified. After the Public Hearing this fall, the final mitigation package will be determined in concert with the environmental agencies.
- Comment: Have you ever looked at the road surface with respect to lessening noise? I know that when you drive from one state to another sometimes the pavement seems quieter.
- Charlie Hood: The more coarse the surface, the more noise you get. We have looked at various types of pavement surfaces to some degree. Generally the new pavement is quieter, but as the pavement wears the noise level tend to increase. The other issues would be safety and maintenance, and as such the Department does not use noise criteria when choosing the type of surface that works best for NH.
- Councilor Griffin: Is it possible that mitigation for a project in one state to be provided by an adjacent state? The mitigation perhaps could be in both states.
- Bill O'Donnell: If the resource agencies agree and the property owner is willing to sell, then it might be possible. NH could not acquire property by eminent domain in Massachusetts.
- Jeff Brillhart: Massachusetts is downstream of NH, and I am not sure that it would be helpful to mitigate flood impacts in NH with mitigation in Massachusetts.
- Councilor Griffin: As part of the Windham-Salem NH 111 project some time ago, there was discussion to allow for a future sewer line to be extended to the Cobbetts Pond area. Has this been taken into consideration for this project? The people do not have adequate septic to comply with the clean water act.
- Jeff Brillhart: During preliminary design for the Windham- Salem project, the possibility was considered to extend water and sewer lines. Windham at that time did not want to extend these services because it might encourage more development. The issue can be revisited with Windham officials, although it is not part of the Windham-Salem layouts under design.
- Comment: Will there be a fence between the bike path and the private properties to control the access? Will there be anything to keep snowmobiles, four-wheelers, etc. off the path?
- Jeff Brillhart: There will be a fence to delineate the right-of-way. I am not sure how the path will be regulated. Bikes do have a problem with motorized vehicles. Snowmobiles are less of a problem as their period of use differs from bike usage.
- Comment: How do you get on and off the bike path?
- Jeff Brillhart: Path access would be from the park and ride lots and the local roads that the path crosses along the highway corridor.
- Representative Morse presented a petition from the property owners in Salem south of Exit 1 who are affected by the proposed layout of future rail right-of-way. The petition requested that the Department not purchase property for a future rail line until such time that the actual rail line location is determined. Representative Morse requested that the Department contact each of the property owners individually. He noted that there are about a dozen property owners who signed the petition.

- Comment: With the status of Amtrak, is the idea of a rail corridor a real consideration?
- Jeff Brillhart: The idea is preserve space for a rail corridor for the future, should rail be pursued in the future.
- Comment: The Portland to Boston rail line seems to be working better than expected.
- Jeff Brillhart: The Portland to Boston corridor is much more successful than it was projected to be in terms of ridership. The Nashua to Lowell extension is another rail service that will be the next link for NH to Boston. That extension may eventually extend to Manchester and Concord in the future.
- Comment: What is the impact to the two residential homes at the intersection of Policy Street and Raymond Avenue? I am concerned with the loss of value to my property.
- Tony Grande: The properties will be impacted as a result of the widening along both roads, which will provide access to the proposed park and ride.
- Jeff Brillhart: The Department will look at each property and determine the impacts based on the final design plans. The Department will appraise the value of each property as if no construction were to take place, and using the final plans, appraise the value of each property as if the project was completed. The difference between the two values would be the basis for negotiating a settlement. The Department will look at the highest and best use of each property and the appraisal will reflect the fair market value of each property.
- Comment: Will the Department consider making those residential properties commercially zoned because of the impacts and the type of improvements being made to the roads?
- Jeff Brillhart: The Town Planning Board regulates the zoning.
- Comment: When the Department determines its mitigation package and before the permitting process ends, will the Department come back to the Town and the Conservation Commission to review that package?
- Jeff Brillhart: Yes.
- Comment: Will there be further changes to the plans, or are these plans pretty much final?
- Jeff Brillhart: I don't think there will be major changes to the design plans, although minor changes may occur. The mitigation plans are not final. There will likely be some changes to accommodate comment from the resource agencies or the Towns as we go forward. I think it is important to follow the entire Public Participation process.
- Comment: I will live directly across from the proposed sound wall. What effects will the barrier have on me?
- Charlie Hood: An abutter should not experience an increase in noise levels once the barriers have been constructed. The Department has not had complaints from property owners about noise reflections from a sound walls on other projects. If there is adequate space in front of the sound walls, the Department has provided landscaping on other projects, and such would likely be the case with the I-93 widening project.